

VI.—Indication of a new Genus of Insectorial Birds.

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CONIROSTRES. LAMPROTORNINÆ ? DENTIROSTRES, CRATEROPODINÆ ?
LEIOTRICHANÆ ?

Genus CUTIA, nobis.

In the suite of specimens of Nipalese birds forwarded by me, three years ago, to the Zoological Society of London, were three or four of the subject of the present article.

They were marked in the imperfect list obligingly returned to me, as a "new form nearly allied to *Pastor*." But, if *Pastor Roseus* be the type of that genus, I confess I cannot perceive much resemblance to our bird: and, if a strong arched compressed bill, united with gradated wings and very strong feet, be the marks of the *Crateropodinae*, to that sub-family, I conceive our bird should be referred, unless the sub-scansorial and *quasi-Parian* character of its feet do not rather affine it with the *Leiotrichanæ*. And, certainly, its wings, tail, and feet have no small resemblance to those of *Pteruthius*, though its bill be totally different and formed very much upon the *Timalian* model.

The true station of our bird can only be determined by a more accurate knowledge of its habits and economy, than I now possess, applied to better and fuller information than I have any means of here acquiring, respecting the *general* affinities and analogies of the *Insectores*.

What adds to my difficulty in attempting to class the bird according to the *Sturnine* relations suggested to me, is, that the so called *Pastor Trallii* (very abundant in *Nipal*) is, in my judgment, a typical *Oriole*, whilst the *Lamprotornis Spilopterus* (also common here) is not easily referable to TEMMINCK's genus *Lamprotornis*, and belongs, I shrewdly suspect, to the *Brachypodinae* of SWAINSON. Without further preface I shall now attempt to characterise our bird as the type of a new genus, but with the necessary prolixity resulting from hesitation as to its family and sub-family.

CUTIA, nobis.

Khatya (quasi-pedatus) of the Nipalese.

Bill, equal to the head, or less, at base as high as broad, arched and compressed throughout, strong, obtuse, and nearly or quite entire. Culmen considerably carinated between the nares, but not much produced among the soft and simple frontal plumes.

Tomia, erect, rather obtuse, and near to the palate. Nares, rather forward, implumose, large, the aperture broad-lunate, lateral, shaded above by a largish nude sub-arched scale. Gape, moderate and nearly

smooth. Plumage, soft, simple and discomposed. Wings and tail, short and firm. 5th alar quill usually longest; two first strongly, two next trivially, and both sub-equally, gradated up to the 5th. Tail, quadrate, firm, with very long coverts. Tarsi, sub-elevate, very strong, and nearly smooth. Anteal toes basally nect, the outer as far as the joint; lateral fores sub-equal; central not elongated; hind very large, sub-depressed, and exceeding either of the lateral fores. Nails compressed, large, strong, falcate and acute. Tongue, simple, sub-cartilaginous, with bifid tip. Type, *Cútia Nipalensis*, nobis. Nos. 254-5 of the specimens and drawings apud Zoological Society of London. In order to illustrate the affinities of our bird, I proceed to compare it with *Pastor Roseus* and with *Lamprotornis Spilopterus*.

In *Pastor Roseus*, as in all the typical *Pastors* in my possession, the bill is longer than the head, straight, conico-cylindric, and softish towards the base. Its base is angulated, and the plumes of its head carried forwards to the anteal end of the nares, are pointed, glossed and elongated. The ample and pointed wings have the 1st quill rudimentary, the 2nd long, and sub-equal to the 3rd, which is always the longest. The tarsi are considerably lengthened and heavily scaled. The toes have the laterals equal; the hind rather less, and the central fore considerably elongated. The outer fore toe has a basal connexion; the inner none. The nails, though large and by no means blunt, are neither curved nor acuminate in any special or significant degree. In *Lamprotornis Spilopterus* the wings are precisely similar to those of *Pastor Roseus*. The bill of *Lamprotornis*—which is scarcely longer than the head, uniformly sub-arched and not angulated—*so far* agrees with that of our *Cútia*. But its base is depressed, whilst forwards it has only a slight compression and sub-cylindric outline. It is, besides, sharply pointed, saliently notched, and its trenchant fine tomixæ are deeply interlocked.

Carry these peculiarities a little further and you have the bill of *Chloropsis*, the birds of which genus further agree with *Lamprotornis Spilopterus* almost entirely in the nature of their food, and the structure of their tongues and stomachs.

On the other hand, the harder, blunter, more solid and compressed bill of *Cútia*, united as it is with a simple tongue, a subtritulating stomach, and a diet consisting of hard seeds and hard insects, would affine our bird to *Pomatorhinus* and its allies, but for the scansorial feet. In *Lamprotornis Spilopterus* the nares are still round and short, though there be somewhat more approach to a nude, membranous tect than in *Pastor Roseus*. In *Lamprotornis*, the lower tarsi, rather than the structure of the feet, seem to indicate less terrestrial habits

than those of *Cútia* : for, in the former, the anteal digits are freer, and the lateral ones shorter in proportion to the central and to the hind one, than in the latter ; whilst the nails have rather less than more of the *Parian* attributes. Lastly, the pointed and burnished feathers on the head of *Lamprotornis Spilopterus* are wholly wanting in our bird. In *Spilopterus* they seem to intimate relationship with the *Stares*. Nor is the intimation unrequired by those who claim such fellowship for this bird, in as much as its habits and essential structure savour more contrast than similitude with the *Sturnidæ*.

As for our *Cútia*, amidst all its anomalies (so to speak, with reference to one's own ignorance) of structure, there is certainly something *Sturnine* in its aspect ; and by certain peculiarities of its feet and wings, as well as by its variegated plumage, it bears some resemblance to *Sturnella*, a genus "leading directly to the true *Starlings*."

Species new. *C. Nipalensis*, nobis ; Nipalese *Cútia*, nobis. Habitat, central and northern regions ; adheres to the forests, feeding on hard insects and on seeds. Gregarious and arboreal.

Color and size. Male, above, brilliant rusty yellow, with jet-black remiges and rectrices. Cap, and a large apert central portion of the wings slaty ; the former confined all round, by a black band proceeding through the eyes from the nares. Below, from chin to legs, pure white ; from legs inclusively to tail-coverts, flavescent : the flanks broadly cross-barred with black : a spot of the same hue at the base of the maxilla : most at the alar quills and the lateral tail feathers, tipped with white : lining of wings, and wings internally and basally, albescent : bill, above blackish, below plumbeous : legs orange yellow : iris, brown : 7 to $7\frac{1}{2}$ inches long by $10\frac{1}{2}$ to 11 wide : bill $\frac{1}{4}$: tarsus $1\frac{3}{8}$: central toe $\frac{1}{8}$, hind $\frac{9}{16}$. The female is a trifle less in size. Her mantle is variegated by longitudinal black drops : and her cheek band is brown instead of black, especially on the ears.

VII.—*Nest of the Bengal Vulture, (Vultur Bengalensis ;) with observations on the power of scent ascribed to the Vulture tribe. By Lieutenant J. HUTTON.*

On the 8th December, 1833, I found four vultures' nests in a large *barkat* tree, near the village of *Futtehgurh*, on the road from *Nee-much* to *Mhow*. These nests were of great thickness, and were constructed of small branches and twigs, mixed with dead leaves ; three of them contained each one egg, of a large size, and quite white. The fourth nest was occupied by a solitary young one, just hatched, and